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THE ETHICS OF MARRIAGE

We are asked so frequently concerning the teachings of Esoterism on the subjects of Marriage and the Family that we have concluded to give consideration to these important institutions in the present number of *THE BULLETIN*. We have formerly treated of the general application of the principles of Good Government in the conduct of national and family life [*BULLETIN* of June 21, 1912], and will now consider them more particularly with reference to our immediate subject.

The Family is the next social unit after the individual—indeed, when all the planes of being are regarded, it is the first *complete* social unit. Considered merely as a civil institution, its functions are to insure to the state a loyal and efficient citizenship and to the individual the maximum protection and training and the fullest opportunity for growth and personal liberty, intended on the one hand to foster the welfare of individuals and to constitute at the same time a bulwark of strength to the state.

But it has more than a purely civil character; it is essentially a primary moral institution of the race, as well as one of the oldest—a fact well attested when we consider that the names designating its members—father, mother, brother, sister—have descended to us from the languages of antiquity, surviving the changes and modifications in nations and forms of government. The idea of the family and the chief relationships of its members one to another, as husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, is not temporary and local; it is permanent and universal, world-wide, age-long; and the principles that govern the family and give

it stability are warp threads on the loom of racial progress and evolution—they run the length of our social fabric.

Looking to the permanency and universality of this institution, one naturally expects to find it connected with some religious or ethical sanction, for religion alone has such far-reaching stability. Accordingly, we find that the Family and Home are, in their moral aspects, bound up intimately with the purposes and ideals of religion, and are effective and necessary instruments of true religious progress. A vigorous, pure, well-ordered domestic life—by virtue of its special faculty of self-perpetuation—is a most potent means of spreading religious teachings and transmitting them to posterity—a fact well understood and utilized by the Roman Catholic Church and many other religious bodies. Even the spiritual teacher consecrated to a life of mystical devotion, though celibate, is known by the children of his faith as Father.

Since the Family is the unit of the state, the first requisite for its proper growth and usefulness is Unity. This is achieved through Love, and manifests in Harmony, or Peace.

It is a mistake to suppose that mutual love between parents or between parents and children is a matter rigidly fixed once for all. Spontaneity of Love should be at the base of marriage, as its impelling cause; it is desirable and even indispensable. But true Love, where it really exists, is also susceptible of cultivation and growth. It is the mission of marriage to provide the proper environment and means for this growth and to create an atmosphere in which children can be properly trained and reared. Love and Tolerance are to be fostered in the interest of the whole organism and all its members, as well as for the resulting benefits to the community. Where all members of the family work together and seek loyally and sincerely to fulfil perfectly each his own functions, forgetful of the failings of others, save where the responsibilities of leadership and parenthood require guidance or firm and loving correction, the establishment of an ideal household is made just so much the easier. In such a case each member has allied himself on the side of Order, and the problem is then simply one of learning what are his proper and normal functions. Progress toward Harmony and Peace is then a matter of attaining true knowledge of the nature of our duties and privileges and of making persistent and right application of the knowledge.

Through order diverse elements are brought together as a harmonious whole, for the realization of common purposes which no one member, unaided, could achieve. Speaking generally, whatever promotes the Unity, Permanence, Stability and Order of the family is good in principle and to be cultivated. Whatever leads to the opposite is to be avoided.

The Family has its inception in Marriage, the bond and symbol of its Unity. For the sake of permanence and stability, the mar-

riage laws of all enlightened times have contemplated a life-union. The ideal pair will not shrink from the complete fulfilment of the marriage bond. It is a link of their own making, forged of eternal causes. Those things which cement the union and safeguard its purity are of God, those which tend to its betrayal or dissolution are temporary and incidental. It is because of the inherent unity of the relation that the greatest freedom consists in fulfilling its obligations and responsibilities. Infidelity and divorce, though they may be incidents in certain stages of our civilization, are expressions of imperfect and not ideal relations, tending in the direction of license rather than liberty. A real marriage can no more be undone than it is possible to undo physical parenthood or unloose the relation of brother and sister.

To seek to correct our own weak places is the most effective way to help improve others—whether they be friends and acquaintances or members of our household—for they have then the stimulus of our enthusiasm without encroachment on their personal liberty, and the silent force of our good example without officious advice which they may be unable to appreciate. It is said that one who realizes fully the spirit of discipleship can be happy in any circumstances. This is because, being poised, he has eliminated selfishness and radiates love, not thinking of any return—the only way of loving which is sure to be crowned with happiness and to receive love.

Normally, it is husband and father who stands at the head of the house. He is the natural protector of its weaker members and the one who primarily determines the nature of its activities and the aims for which it is to strive. The place of the wife, though usually less conspicuous, is one of the greatest charm and usefulness and her womanly beauty is to virile strength like Mercy tempering Justice. The Guardian Angel of the Hearth, it is her mission, as wife and mother, to dispose and adjust affairs within the home, to cooperate with the husband in realizing the aims of the family, and to rear and train its children.

It may happen that one member fails or is unable to perform the functions normal to his station, so that it is necessary for some other member to step in and fill the breach. But this should be done only under the spur of imperative necessity, for in such a case the whole family is hampered by the karmic consequences of this invasion of its Order. It is preferable, where possible, for each to perform perfectly his own duties rather than to take up the discarded ones laid aside by another. In all crises a spirit of loving cooperation will go far toward smoothing the hard places. The great fundamental duties of husband, wife, father, mother, child, are so inherent in the relations themselves that none other than the person in whom they inhere can perform them perfectly.

Continued on page 7.

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St. Thomas once said: "A thing is not just because God wills it, but God wills it because it is just." Had St. Thomas logically deduced all the consequences of this beautiful thought, he would have found the philosophical stone, and besides being the angel of the school, he would have been its reformer. To believe in the reason of God and in the God of reason is to render atheism impossible. When Voltaire said: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him," he felt rather than understood the reason which is in God. Does God really exist? There is no knowing, but we desire it to be so, and hence we believe it. Faith thus formulated is reasonable faith. —Levi. *Transcendental Magic*.

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Some of our friends write that they would like to join us in Active Membership, if they did not live so far away that it would be impossible for them to come to Headquarters for Initiation.

This, though desirable, is not essential, arrangements having been made by which Initiation into the Society can be given in any part of the world. For particulars, address Secretary O. E. S.



The pin of the O. E. S. is slightly smaller than the given cut. It shows in the Center the Sacred name (of deep Esoteric meaning) in white lettering, and from this point there pour forth rays of Wisdom, Love and Power upon all beings throughout the whole Universe. The Kaf, which is shown in gold, symbolizes our Society receiving these rays, collecting them and giving them forth in spiritual truths to the whole world. The background is the dark blue of Space, and the curved surface represents our world or sphere.

The Kaf is the third letter of the alphabet of the Magi; it is the ineffable symbol of the Sacred Science and represents the power of the Initiates and also the realization of that power. Our Society has chosen this symbol to represent its characteristics of strength and activity in serving the world, and also to signify the place it is designed to occupy and the part it has to play in the New Era.

CORRESPONDING MEMBERSHIP

Many write to us for advice as to their reading or their personal problems, and these we gladly help as far as we can, although the handling of a large and varied correspondence with a limited force is a matter of considerable difficulty. When however we suggest that they join our Society as Corresponding Members, many shrink back. To take this step seems like joining a church or taking a pledge of some kind; it seems like limiting or binding oneself; in fact we are often asked whether obligations are not undertaken which might in some way interfere with liberty of thought or action. Many, too, are afraid of being subjected to hostile criticism.

To such we wish to say that nothing could be further from the truth. To become a Corresponding Member means simply to enter oneself for a definite course of instruction; no pledge of any kind is taken and nothing prevents the member from retiring at any time. There is nothing in it which is inconsistent with membership in any church or other organization, or belief in any religion, Christian or otherwise. A considerable portion of our members are active church members and some of them are orthodox clergymen in charge of large congregations, while all the important Christian denominations and all the great religions are represented. The membership lists are entirely confidential, are not published and are not accessible to any but the officers having the work in charge.

Why should you join? Because no matter how carefully your books are chosen by you or for you, and no matter how carefully they are studied, more direct and personal guidance is usually helpful, and by availing yourself of it you will not only save time but you will avoid much retracing of steps; you will be spared the risk of the many by-paths and pitfalls to which the student of occult subjects is exposed; you will be spared the danger of being misled by those, and they are many, whose object is not your advancement but their own personal profit. An advantage of such instruction is that it is treated from a definite standpoint, that it separates the essential from the unessential, whereas if one reads books only, one often fails to get that point of view which is needed as a basis for consistent action. The instruction is so arranged as to bring out the special difficulties and needs of each member and to meet them by personal correspondence when necessary. No system of teaching occultism has ever been devised which permits the handling of individual problems to the same extent and which brings the student more closely in touch with the instructor.

Those who are ready, and who desire more advanced instruction than the Corresponding Members' Course offers, can become Active Members of the Society, but even for such the former Course is useful as an introductory step. For particulars address Secretary O. E. S., 1419 R Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

MEDITATION

All great teachers have enjoined on their disciples humility, as an essential to entering upon the true path. "Whosoever," says the Lord Isa, "shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

But so persistent and self-assertive is the personality of man that we habitually forget to be humble, and even when we do remember, there are always so many and such good reasons for our disobedience, that a proper pride, self-respect and conscious virtue blind our eyes to the low and narrow doorway.

For the personality knows that it has but this one life to live, and its motto is "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die." The soul has a farther outlook and a clearer knowledge of the truth; its life is for all time, without beginning, without end, eternal in the heavens. It is willing to suffer that it may advance, to be humiliated, bruised, persecuted, to become as nothing in the world, if by this humility the world may be profited. Humbly it listens, to discern, if possible, the voice of the Master in every one of the vicissitudes of life, and gently, as a little child, it learns from all.

The adoption of this gentle, receptive, uncritical attitude is the first requisite for entrance on the path. The true disciple is ever humble, submissive and obedient. He does not submit himself to the *personality* or *personal will* of anyone, but he obeys because the God within him recognizes the Divine Truth in the words of his Teacher, in his fellow-man, in all that is! Blessed, indeed, is he who can and does learn from every other creature.

HUMILITY.

1. Be humble if thou wouldst attain to wisdom. Be humbler still when wisdom thou hast mastered.
2. Those who are humiliated and yet do not humiliate, those who hear themselves put to scorn and yet answer not, those who do all for love and accept their afflictions with joy—of them the Scripture speaks when it says: "The friends of God shine as a sun in His Splendor."
3. He who endures reproach gladly, learns from it his faults and tries his mettle upon it.
4. The greatest souls are the humblest and the least obtrusive.
5. Humility contends with greater enemies, is more constantly engaged, more violently assaulted, bears more, suffers more, and requires greater courage to support itself, than any instance of worldly bravery.
6. The entrance to the true path is small and difficult, and he who would enter must become as nothing in the eyes of men.
7. Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

In civilized states the laws regulating marriage are framed not only for the welfare and convenience of the husband and wife and their offspring, but also for the interest of the community, and it has been well said that the state is a silent party to every marriage. Laws should be so framed as to protect the integrity and unity of the marriage institution, if racial unity and integrity are to be preserved; and the principles of ethics and religion must be the teachers of our civil law-makers.

In times to come, undoubtedly the state will make more ample provision for the protection of mothers and children, whose welfare is now too generally regarded as matter of private and not public concern. In reality it is of the highest public and racial import. But whatever advanced ground the state may ultimately take upon this question, the family will always remain the appropriate institution for the cultivation of conjugal love and the upbringing of children. For this reason, it must be permanent not only during the life of the parents, but must also be a vehicle for the transmission of tradition, a priceless heritage to posterity. It is in the bosom of the home that children will continue to receive the blessings of a training and culture which cannot possibly be afforded to them in such fullness in any other way.

True progress in the laws of marriage, as well as in the family itself as a social organism, is through the medium of religious cultivation, by which individual character is developed. It is the aggregate of individual characters that gives the moral tone to the community.

BOOKS FOR SALE AND RENT

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Figures in () show cost of sending books to the borrower and is charged to him; he prepays transportation when returning books. When books are purchased no transportation is charged, but when rented books are bought after being kept more than two weeks all time in excess of two weeks must be paid for.

Address The Oriental Esoteric Library, care of The Oriental Esoteric Society, 1443 Q St. N. W.

Esoterism and Devotional Classics—Continued

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| Raja Yoga, <i>Smami Vivekananda</i> | 1.50 | (.11) |
| The Gospel of Ramakrishna, <i>Swami Abhedananda</i> .. | 1.50 | (.07) |

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|---|-------------------------------------|-------|
| The Imitation of Christ, <i>Thomas a Kempis</i> | leather, .75; cloth .35 | (.05) |
| The Bible in India, <i>L. Jacolliot</i> | 2.00 | (.12) |
| The Perfect Way, or The Finding of Christ, <i>Anna Kingsford</i> | paper, .50; cloth 1.50 | (.14) |
| Mystic Christianity, <i>Ramacharaka</i> | 1.00 | (.10) |
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| Advanced Course in Yogi Philosophy, <i>Ramacharaka</i> | 1.00 | (.10) |
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| The Power of Silence, <i>Horatio W. Dresser</i> | 1.35 | (.12) |
| Lao-Tze's Tao-Teh-King; The Book of the Simple Way, translated by <i>W. G. Old</i> | .75 | (.06) |
| Lao-Tze's Wu-Wei (A Taoist Phantasy), <i>Henri Borel</i> | paper, .15; cloth 1.00 | (.06) |
| Dreams, <i>Olive Schreiner</i> | .75 | (.06) |
| Kim, <i>Rudyard Kipling</i> | leather 1.50 | (.08) |

Further book lists will appear from week to week. All books are for sale unless marked "not sold." We shall be glad to have you purchase books through the Society, and we can supply books for purchase even though they are not on our loaning list.

"A little consideration of what takes place around us every day would show us that a higher law than that of our will regulates events; that our painful labors are unnecessary and fruitless; that only in our easy, simple, spontaneous action are we strong, and by contenting ourselves with obedience we become divine.

"Real action is in silent moments. The epochs of our life are not in the visible facts of our choice of a calling, our marriage, our acquisition of an office, and the like, but in a silent thought by the wayside as we walk; in a thought which revises our entire manner of life and says,—"Thus hast thou done, but it were better thus."

—Emerson.